PUBLIC HEALTH ACT, 1872.

Report for the Year 1898.

BEING THE

TWENTY-FOURTH

ANNUAL REPORT

ON THE

SANITARY CONDITION

OF THE

TROWBRIDGE URBAN SANITARY DISTRICT.

PRESENTED TO THE

TROWBRIDGE URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

BY

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To the Chairman and Members of the Urban District Council of Trowbridge.

GENTLEMEN,

I beg to submit to you my Sixth Annual Report on the Public Health and Sanitary condition of the District.

The estimated population of the District to the middle of 1898 is 12,500, that at the last census, 1891, being 11,717.

The number of births registered during the year were 264, 127 males and 137 females; being a birth rate of 21·1 per 1,000.

The number of deaths registered during the same period were 183 (one having been deducted as not belonging to the District) 79 males and 104 females, being a death-rate of 14·6 per 1,000.

The death rate for 1898 is somewhat higher than last year. This is accounted for somewhat by the epidemics of Influenza, Measles, and Scarlet Fever, together with six deaths from accidents and three suicides.

The deaths amongst children under one year were 27, a death rate of 2·16 per 1,000; and 102·2 per 1,000 births; this is higher than last year, which was 1·9 and 90.9 respectively.

Zymotic Disease was responsible for 13 deaths (Measles 7, Scarlet Fever 3, Diphtheria 2, Membranous Croup 1); a death rate of 1·04 per 1,000

The number of deaths of persons of 65 years of age and upwards were 58, a death rate of 4·6 per 1,000, and included 33 between 65 and 75; 23—75 and 85; and 1—85 and 95.

The causes of death were:—*Zymotic Diseases* 13; (Measles 7, Scarlet Fever 3, Diphtheria 2, and Membranous Croup 1); *Specific Febrile Diseases* 11 (*Pyœmia* 1; Puerperal Fever 1, and Influenza 9); *Wasting Diseases* 21 (Phthisis 9; Tabes Mesenterica 6; Marasmus 5 and Tubercular-meningitis 1); *Malignant Diseases* 15 (Cancer 14; Sarcoma 1); *Diseases of the Nervous System* 22; *Vascular System* 17 (Heart Disease 13; Senile Gangrene 2) *Myxœdema* 1, and Addison's Disease 1); *Diseases of the Organs of Locomotion* 6 (Rheumatic Fever 5 and Mollities Ossium 1); *Respiratory Organs* 25; *Digestive Organs* 14; *Urinary Organs* 6; *Diseases of the Skin* 1 (Elephantiasis 1); *Child Birth* 2; *Premature Births* 4; *Old Age* 10; *Inquests* 18; (Accidents 6 and Suicides 3). Total 184.

Summary of the chief points of the year's vital statistics:—

Birth-rate	21·1	per 1000.
Death-rate	14·6	,,
Zymotic death-rate ..	1·04	,,
Death-rate among children under one	2·16	,,
Proportion of deaths under one to 1000 births	102·2	,,
Death-rate at 65 and upwards	4·6	,,

There were 18 inquests held during the year, including 6 deaths from accident and three from suicide.

There is a steady improvement in the provision of better class houses for the working classes, several new houses have been erected during the year, and others are in the course of erection. Many of the older houses are unoccupied. In many instances too, the drainage of private homes has been improved.

The following houses have been closed during the year, under the Housing of the Working Classes Act, 1890, being unfit for human habitation, viz:—

No. 30, The Halve; and No. 9, Lower Broad Street, Conigre.

I have inspected the Slaughter-houses, Bake-houses, and Common Lodging Houses in the course of my routine work, and I have invariably found them kept in a satisfactory condition.

The District has been inspected by me once a Quarter, accompanied by the Sanitary ~~Infecter~~ Inspector. I have also systematically inspected the courts in the District.

The Infectious Diseases occuring in the District during the year included 109 cases of Scarlet Fever, 18 of Erysipelas, 5 of Diphtheria, 1 of Membranous Croup, 2 of Enteric Fever, and 1 of Puerperal Fever.

Thirty-nine cases of Scarlet Fever were sent to the Isolation Hospital during the year. In my monthly Report of February, I drew your attention to the difficulty I had in effectually isolating cases of Scarlet Fever, the accommodation at the hospital not being sufficient. It was decided to erect a temporary wood and iron building. The new section, containing 8 beds, was used for the first time on October 22nd. With this addition of 8 beds, I hope to be able to grapple more effectually with Scarlet Fever in the future than in the past.

The advantage of isolation in hospital will be seen when out of the 39 cases treated in hospital there has been no secondary case of infection, whereas in several houses in the District where so called isolation has been carried out several cases of secondary infection have occurred. At the end of the year there were no cases in the hospital, and, as far as I could judge, no cases in the District. Out of these 109 cases there were three deaths, showing that on the whole the epidemic was a very mild one, but none the less infectious. There was no death at the Isolation Hospital.

On investigating the cause of a number of cases of Scarlet Fever in the Waterworks Road District it was found that the drainage of the district was generally very bad. On examination of several of the sewers it was found necessary that in part of Park Street, Bond Street and in Bond Street Buildings, new sewers should be laid and plans, &c., have been prepared and are now waiting the sanction of the Local Government Board. When these new sewers have been laid it will be necessary that the whole of the house drains connecting to the sewers should be thoroughly overhauled and brought up to date so far as sanitary efficiency is concerned.

Of the 5 cases of Diphtheria, there were 2 deaths. Only in one of the cases could a cause be found—at Upper Bond Street, the trap and drain outside back door was found to be foul and offensive. The child drank some of the offensive matter from the trap.

Of the case of Membranous Croup *fatal;* no cause could be found.

Of the two cases of Enteric Fever notified, both were supplied with the Company's water for drinking purposes and there were no sanitary defects. Probably they were both imported.

The case of Puerperal Fever notified proved fatal.

Influenza was epidemic during January, February and March. Measles was also epidemic about the same period. Influenza accounting for 9 deaths and Measles 7.

The disease known as Malignant, such as Cancer, shows a considerable increase—15 cases compared with 7 cases in 1897.

The disease know as pulmonary consumption or Phthisis shows a slight increase, 9 cases of Phthisis to 6 in 1897; but a decrease compared to 1896, Tabes Mesenterica and Marasmus 11, to 8 in 1897.

Already by the effects of subsoil drainage, by improved hygiene, by the higher general standard of comfort and cleanliness, by greater attention to ventilation and to the construction of dwellings, the number of deaths from Consumption and other forms of Tuberculosis have been reduced by more than 50 per cent. in fifty years. The single sad exception to this statement is that Tabes Mesenterica, the disease of the bowel in children, traceable to tubercle conveyed by milk, has increased. But while sanitary improvements have so far reduced the mortality from tuberculous diseases, science has pointed out the way by which these ravages may not only be directly mitigated, but directly prevented. It is now definitely known that consumption is a contagious disease; that it is communicated from person to person, and from animal to man; and that it arises in no other way. It is not an inherited vice in the constitution which declares itself in the course of time, but while some constitutions are

more prone to it than others, and while an unhealthy mode of life and unwholesome surroundings predispose to its attacks, every case of consumption is derived from some pre-existing case. Phthisis, with all the various forms of tuberculous disease, is the work of a microbe, the tubercle bacillus discovered by Koch. The principal way in which millions of these living organisms are conveyed from a diseased to a healthy person is by means of the expectoration, and which when dried is suspended in the atmosphere, especially of ill-ventilated rooms, in the form of dust and inhaled. Happily they are not present in the breath of the consumptive patient, so that consumption is not contracted merely by breathing the same air or living in the same house with a sufferer.

When we come to examine the death-rates from Tabes Mesenterica and Marasmus, forms of Tuberculosis in which the infection is received into the alimentary canal instead of the lungs, it will be found not only that all the gain attained at other ages has been lost in the case of children and infants, but that in addition to this there has been a very heavy increase in deaths under one year of age from this disease.

This increase has gone hand in hand with a steady increase in the consumption of cow's milk as a food in this country. The removal of every tuberculous cow from our dairies and cow sheds would mean the removal at once of over half a million cows from our milk supply. All cows, however, with advanced tuberculosis in any part of the body, should be at once seized and slaughtered.

I would urge that the people be educated to acquire the habit of cooking milk before use, for if milk were boiled for a single instant the danger of tuberculosis would be gone, and a cause of thousands of deaths every year among children and young people would be removed.

Attached to my Report will be found Tables of Deaths, of Population, Births, and of New Cases of Infectious Sickness.

I remain, Gentlemen,

Yours obedient servant,

R. T. RICHARDSON,

F.R. Inst. P.H., M.O.H.

Table of Deaths

During the Year 1898, *in the Trowbridge Urban Sanitary District, classified according to Diseases, Ages, and Localities.*

Name of Locality. (a)	Mortality from all causes, at subjoined ages. At all Ages. (b)	Under 1 year (c)	1 and under 5 (d)	5 and under 15 (e)	15 and under 25 (f)	25 and under 65. (g)	65 and upwards. (h)	(i)	Mortality from subjoined Causes, distinguishing Deaths of Children under Five Years of Age. Scarlatina.	Diphtheria.	Membranous Croup.	Puerperal.	Measles.	Diarrhœa and Dysentery.	Rheumatic Fever.	Phthisis.	Bronchitis, Pneumonia and Pleurisy	Heart Disease.	Influenza.	Injuries.	All other Diseases.	TOTAL.
Trowbridge Urban Sanitary District	183	27	20	9	4	65	58	Under 5	2	1	1	..	7	5	..	..	9		..	1	26	50
								5 upwds	1	1	..	1	..	..	5	9	17	14	9	4	72	133

The subjoined numbers have also to be taken into account in judging of the above records of mortality.

Deaths occurring within the district among	..	..	..		..	..	..	Under 5	...	..	..	..	..		..	..	..	.	..	..	..	..
persons not belonging thereto	..	..	..	1	..	..		5 upwrds	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	1

Table of Population, Births, & of New Cases of Infectious Sickness,

Coming to the knowledge of the Medical Officer of Health during the year 1898, *in the Trowbridge Urban Sanitary District, classified according to Diseases, Ages, and Localities.*

Name of Locality. (a)	Population at all Ages.		Registered Births (d)	Aged under 5 or over 5 (e)	New cases of Sickness in each Locality, coming to the knowledge of the Medical Officer of Health.						Number of such Cases removed from their Homes in the several Localities for Treatment in Isolation Hospital.
	Last Census. (b)	Estimated mdle of 1898 (c)			Scarlatina.	Diphtheria.	Membranous Croup.	Fevers. Enteric or Typhoid	Puerperal.	Erysipelas.	Scarlatina.
Trowbrige Urban Sanitary District	11,717	12,500	264	Under 5	26	2	1	..	..	..	7
				5 upwds	83	3	..	2	1	18	32
Totals	..	...	..	Under 5	26	2	1	..	..	..	7
				5 upwds	83	3	..	2	1	18	32

To the Chairman and Members of the Trowbridge Urban District Council.

GENTLEMEN,

I beg to present my Report for the past year as Surveyor and Inspector of Nuisances.

Drainage.

In the early part of the year the work of connecting up the remaining Cottages in Upper Studley to the new sewers was completed.

Owing to the prevalence of infectious diseases in the Waterworks District, an examination was made of a number of the sewers, some of which were found to be very defective. It was decided to replace them with new pipe sewers, and also to continue the sewer in Frome Road, to take the drainage of the Rock Estate. Plans, &c., have been prepared and sent to the Local Government Board for their sanction to a loan to carry out the work. With regard to the leakages in the intercepting sewer, and the best method of dealing with them, the matter having had the careful consideration of the Sanitary Committee, it was decided that a portion should be relaid with Hassall's patent jointed pipes, and this work is still in hand. With a view of ascertaining the best and most economical method of dealing with the sewage of the town, it was decided to carry out some experiments on bacterial lines, and a series of artificial filters were constructed. The experiments when completed, will, without doubt, prove of value in determining the particular method of disposal.

Isolation Hospital.

The accommodation at the Isolation Hospital not being adequate, a new corrugated iron and wood building was erected with beds for eight patients, the necessary rooms for nurse, and bath room and E.C.

Improvements.

The roadways in Newtown, Bradford Road, and Wingfield Road, have been widened.

Pavements.

A commencement was made with the relaying of some of the main road footpaths, Silver Street (south side); Stallard Street by Messrs. Clark's; Roundstone Street by Mr. Evans' and Victoria Buildings; portions of Bradford Road, Wingfield Road and Newtown have been paved, kerbed, and channelled.

Building.

The Building Trade though steady, has shewn no great activity. The plans for dwelling houses and business premises shew a gratifying increase over 1897, being 37 as against 19; while the total number for the year was 70, an increase of 15 over the previous year.

Dwelling Houses and Business Premises	37
Additions, Alterations, and Small Erections ..	33
	70

The number of dwelling houses passed for occupation was 14 as compared with 19 in 1897.

Sanitary.

The following table sets forth the particulars of the work of sanitary inspection, and the work done in abating nuisances:—

Complaints received	21
Common Lodging Houses inspected	3
Slaughterhouses inspected	12
Cowsheds and Dairies inspected	24
Houses built and passed for occupation	14
Premises newly connected with water mains ..	27
Overcrowding of dwelling houses	4
Houses closed	2
Nuisances detected	245
Nuisances abated	220
Notices served	245

In company with the Medical Officer of Health, I have made quarterly inspections of the Slaughter-Houses and Common Lodging Houses, and found them generally in a satisfactory condition. I detected four cases of overcrowding which were abated. Two houses were condemned as unfit for habitation and were closed. There was one seizure of unsound fish, the owner of which was prosecuted and fined. The prevalence of scarlet fever caused a large amount of work in disinfecting houses, bedding, and clothes. The internal sanitary fittings of the Town Hall, with their connections to the main drains, have been relaid and made sound. The Cottage Hospital has been thoroughly re-drained throughout. Ten new W.C's were erected with flushing apparatus.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

F. E. G. BRADSHAW.

Town Hall, January, 1899.